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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

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SUBJECT: NIE-34: SPAIN'S POSITION IN THE EAST-WEST STRUGGLE
(Working Draft)

CONCLUSIONS

1. The geographic location and terrain features of Spain make it potentially valuable to the Western defense effort, either as a base of operations against the USSR, or as a defensible redoubt in the event that the rest of Western Europe were overrun by Soviet forces. Six useful airfields already exist, two of them capable of handling heavy bombers. Four seaplane bases, and three naval bases, would also be of immediate, though limited, value.

2. We believe that it will not be difficult to procure from the Spanish government long-term rights to develop and use a few convenient air and naval bases in Spanish territory, in return for a reasonable amount of economic and military aid from the US.

3. To use Spain as a major base area for US operations, or to secure from Spain a substantial contribution in men and materials to the Western defense effort, would be in-

SECRET

possible without large-scale US economic and military assistance. The Spanish railroad and highway system is not in condition to meet the requirements of a major base area. The Spanish economy is too run-down to permit any additional outlay for defense. The Spanish armed forces are neither equipped nor trained to contend with a major enemy.

4. The nature of Franco's government is such as to present serious obstacles to any large-scale US effort at economic and military assistance. We believe that the Spanish regime is stable, but that it is too corrupt and administratively incompetent to put through a program of recovery and development without great mismanagement and waste. We believe also that Franco would oppose any close US supervision or guidance of such a program.

5. It is probable that the major allies of the US will not protest strongly against a US-Spanish agreement on base rights, but they would view with great disfavor any extensive program of economic and military aid to Franco. Though popular distaste for Franco in some European countries is diminishing, we believe that Spanish membership in NATO is out of the question for at least a year.

SECRET

SECRET

DISCUSSION

1. By far the most important asset of Spain, from the point of view of Western defense, is its strategic location. The Iberian Peninsula dominates the western entrance to the Mediterranean, lies on the normal air routes connecting Western Europe with South America and Africa, and flanks the Atlantic approaches to Western Europe. Its terrain offers strong defensive capabilities, favorable to its development and security as a major base area. The Pyrenees mountain range presents a formidable obstacle to a land assault from France. Either the entire Peninsula, or some coastal portion of it, could become a defensible redoubt or beachhead if the remainder of Europe were overrun by Soviet forces.

2. Besides the advantages of its location, Spain has certain valuable raw materials -- tungsten ore, mercury, iron, iron pyrites, coal, copper, lead, tin, strontium. The exportable surpluses of these are already available to the Western powers, but production of some could be substantially increased. The Spanish textile industry, if assured of raw materials and new equipment, could make a useful contribution. Spanish plants can manufacture some of the less complicated items of military equipment. The Spanish government is

SECRET

SECRET

indubitably anti-Communist and anti-Soviet, and so are the Spanish people. Some two million Spaniards had combat experience in the Civil War; many of them could be effective in the ground forces, if properly equipped and trained.

3. At the present time, two Spanish airfields are capable of supporting sustained heavy bomber, medium bomber, and jet light bomber operations; one of them is at Madrid, however, and thus too far from the sea to be assured of good logistic support in the present state of Spanish railroads. The other is at Valencia, on the Mediterranean coast. Four other fields can support limited heavy and medium bomber operations. All these fields are within combat operating range of Moscow for B-29 type aircraft. Four seaplane bases, three of them outside Spain proper, now in operation, are strategically located for anti-submarine operations. Spain has three principal naval bases, each capable at present of giving limited logistical assistance to Western fleets. (For more detail concerning bases see Appendix B).

4. The Spanish government can, and probably will, grant the US right of access to and use of at least some of the bases mentioned above; these could be useful to Western defense almost immediately. The government may also grant the

- 4 -
CONFIDENTIAL
SECRET

SECRET

right to develop and maintain new bases at appropriate sites. Spain can contribute a sizeable, largely unskilled labor force, which, though of low efficiency, is virtually untouched by Communist sympathy or influence, and could be effectively employed at the bases. Some local materials, especially cement, might be available for immediate use.

5. Apart from these few presently operable bases, and sites for possible new bases, no further useful contribution by Spain to Western defense could be expected before a substantial amount of US technical, economic and military aid had been granted and had had time to take effect.^{1/} We believe that the Spanish government under present circumstances cannot possibly make available any appreciable additional share of the gross national product for defense purposes.

^{1/} Obviously it would not be necessary for the US to rehabilitate the entire Spanish economy and social system in order to get a useful Spanish contribution to Western defense. It is doubtless true, within reasonable limits, that the amount of the Spanish contribution would be roughly proportional to the amount of the US investment. Without more comprehensive surveys of the Spanish economic and military situation than have yet been made, however, it is impossible to give more precise estimates on this point. In Appendixes "A" and "B" to this paper representative facts are given concerning the present economic and military condition of Spain, as far as we now know it. These facts, with others like them, form the background for the economic and military estimates in the text.

- 5 -

SECRET

SECRET

Spain is a poor country, with a backward, stagnant economy, and a singularly inflexible and antiquated social system. The dictatorship has not succeeded in stimulating a vigorous national revival.

6. The Spanish Army is neither trained nor equipped to contend with a major enemy; it would be useless to send any of it abroad in its present condition even if political arrangements could be made to do so. The combat effectiveness of the Spanish Air Force is practically nil against a major foe. The Spanish Navy could do useful patrol service, but only if it were given modern equipment and training. Before Spain could become a "major base area" (comparable, e.g., to Britain in World War II), a thoroughgoing rehabilitation at least of the main routes of the railroad and highway system would seem to be essential. To make extensive use not only of Spanish territory but also of Spanish economic and military potential in the anti-Soviet cause would call for a major effort of national reconstruction, involving an expenditure by the US roughly comparable to that put into France during the past four years.

PROBLEMS IN THE REALIZATION OF THE SPANISH POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION

7. It will probably not be difficult to procure from the Spanish government long-term rights of developing and using

SECRET

SECRET

a few convenient bases. General Franco has already signified his willingness to bear a part in the anti-Communist effort and to engage in "defensive" military conversations with US representatives. He will of course make the best bargain he can. He requires and will expect to receive economic aid and military equipment, but his real reward for granting base rights will be that the stability and continuity of his regime will thenceforth to some degree be publicly recognized as a security interest of the United States.

8. If it be desired to go beyond the acquisition of a few bases, and to embark upon programs directed towards the development of Spain into a major base area or towards securing a substantial contribution in men and materials from Spain for the defense of Western Europe, much more serious difficulties will be encountered. The physical shortcomings of the Spanish economy are great, as has been indicated above, and some of them would have to be overcome as a precondition to the success of such programs. But the greatest obstacles to any active, rather than passive, participation by Spain in Western defense are to be found in the character and history of the Franco regime.

- 7 -

SECRET

SECRET

9. We believe that the present Spanish regime is stable and is likely to remain so. It neither needs nor pretends to rest upon general popular support; it depends primarily on the Army, and despite various rumors to the contrary we believe that the Army has at present no disposition to effect or allow a change. A relatively small amount of US economic assistance could alleviate some of the genuine popular misery which is currently the most important cause of unrest. Military aid, even in small amounts, would probably confirm the support of the Army for the regime, and render it better able to deal with possible future upheavals.

10. But Franco's dictatorship, though politically stable and militarily fairly competent, is administratively corrupt and inefficient. It cannot command the services of enough capable administrators to carry through a vigorous and far-reaching program of economic recovery and development. We doubt that it could even administer a more modest program with efficiency. We believe moreover that Franco would strongly oppose close US supervision and guidance of any aid program, and that he will try to keep US influence within Spain at a minimum, insulating his people as far as possible from contact with liberalism and Protestantism. Under such cir-

- 8 -

SECRET

SECRET

cumstances it would be difficult to prevent mismanagement and waste in the implementation of a program of US assistance to Spain. Purely military aid, designed to re-equip and re-train the armed forces, would, we believe, have a better chance of being effectively used.

11. The problem of developing Spanish capabilities, and especially of integrating a Spanish military and economic contribution into the common Western defense effort, is further complicated by the almost pathological distaste for the Franco regime which still inspires certain important sections of the populations of Western Europe. In some countries, such as Norway and Great Britain, this opinion is exceedingly strong; in others such as Italy it is much less so; in Portugal it is practically non-existent. The majority of the voting public, at least in the northern NATO countries, is still opposed to any alliance or close connection with Spain, and is considerably annoyed by US moves to give economic or military assistance to the Spanish dictator.

12. If this powerful sentiment against a Spanish connection were purely ideological in character it might be easier to deal with, and would doubtless be confined to a narrower segment of public opinion. It is reinforced, however, by two other opinions of a different nature: (1) that any US aid

SECRET

SECRET

given to Spain is subtracted from the aid available for NATO powers; and (2) that in building up Spain the US is demonstrating an intention to abandon the rest of Europe to Soviet invasion, and to fix a defense line at the Pyrenees. No politician in a NATO country can risk the accusation that he stands for a policy designed to abandon his country to the invader. Hence, even those who are aware of the true value of Spain in a strategic sense find it difficult publicly to defend their views.

13. Hostility to Franco among the people and governments of Europe is gradually diminishing, or at least it is being slowly submerged in other and more pressing concerns. The British government, long one of the most adamant in opposition to Franco, will raise no basic objection to a US-Spanish agreement for the acquisition of base rights. Neither will the government of France, and we believe that there will be no more than a murmur of protest from any part of the public save the Communists and fellow-travellers. For the reasons suggested above, however, public and governmental protest in the NATO countries (except Portugal) would doubtless increase proportionally to any increase in US commitments or grants to Spain. A really substantial program of economic and military assistance to Spain at the present moment would be viewed with

- 10 -

SECRET

SECRET

strong disfavor by the major allies of the US. We believe that Spain's admission to NATO is out of the question for at least a year. This belief is strengthened by the fact that the Spanish government itself has indicated a decided lack of enthusiasm for affiliation with NATO and a strong preference for bilateral arrangements with the US.

14. In view of the improvement which has taken place during the last year in commercial and diplomatic relations between Spain and the NATO it would be rash to assert that admission of Franco Spain to NATO will always be politically infeasible. Professional military men in Western Europe, as well as many civilians accustomed to considering military problems, are well aware of the strategic advantages of access to Spanish territory. Popular opposition to an alliance may gradually diminish as more normal associations with Spain increase. Old ideological and political animosities will be replaced by new ones. A Conservative government in Britain would tend to favor closer ties with Spain, and would have some influence in that respect upon Norway and Denmark. The French fear that Europe east of Spain may be abandoned to the enemy may diminish as NATO strength grows. And the possible admission of other countries to NATO -- West Germany, Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia -- might (as some Europeans think it would)

- 11 -

CONFIDENTIAL
SECRET

SECRET

have the psychological effect of transforming that organization into a more conventional kind of anti-Soviet military alliance, all members of which would not need to present democratic qualifications. For these reasons we believe that European opposition to the association of Spain in Western defense will diminish, but only gradually, and over a fairly long period of time.

- 12 -

SECRET